

REMARKS / ARGUMENTS

Status of the Claims

Claims 1, 3-5, 7-9, 11-13, 15-17, 19-21, 23-24, 26, 28, and 30 are currently present in the Application. Claims 1, 9, 17, and 26, 28, and 30 are independent claims. Claims 1, 9, 17, 19-21, 23, 24, 26, 28, and 30 have been amended in this Response. Claims 2, 10, 18, 25, 27, and 29 have been canceled, and no claims have been added in this Response.

Drawings

Applicant noted with appreciation the acceptance by the Examiner of Applicant's formal drawings filed on 14 October 2003. However, in Applicant's attorneys discussion with the Examiner on October 12, 2006, the Examiner noted that some of the drawings were difficult to view, probably due to scanning errors. Therefore, Applicant has included a revised set of drawings that addresses shading issues that may cause scanning errors. No new matter has been added in Applicant's revised set of drawings.

Examiner Interview

Applicant notes with appreciation discussions initiated by the Examiner between Applicant's undersigned attorney and the Examiner on October 12, 2006. During the interview, the Examiner and Applicant's attorney discussed claim amendments that would overcome prior objections and place the application in a condition for allowance. Applicant has amended the claims accordingly and respectfully requests a Notice of Allowance as the amended claims are in condition for allowance and overcome all previous rejections.

Claim Rejections

Applicant notes that the Office Action dated October 20, 2006 does not specifically reject Applicant's claims in light of any specific prior art references. Applicant respectfully directs the Examiner's attention to Applicant's amendment and

response dated July 13, 2006 that successfully traversed the rejections set forth in the Office Action dated April 14, 2006.

Conclusion

As a result of the foregoing, it is asserted by Applicant that the remaining claims in the Application are in condition for allowance, and Applicant respectfully requests an early allowance of such claims.

Applicant respectfully request that the Examiner contact the Applicant's attorney listed below if the Examiner believes that such a discussion would be helpful in resolving any remaining questions or issues related to this Application.

Respectfully submitted,

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